

IN RECOGNITION OF NATIONAL
AREA HEALTH EDUCATION CEN-
TER (AHEC) WEEK 2022

HON. KATHY CASTOR

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Ms. CASTOR of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to acknowledge the contributions of the nation's Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) and applaud the vitally important health care workforce programs they conduct to improve access to care for medically underserved individuals, particularly in the Tampa Bay area.

AHECs, established by Congress in 1971 as one of the Title VII Health Professions Training programs, are the workforce development, training and education machine for the nation's health care safety net programs. Over the past 5 years, the AHEC program has trained 2 million health care professionals who are prepared to deliver culturally appropriate, high-quality, team-based care, with an emphasis on primary care for rural and underserved populations.

The nation's 300 AHECs are in nearly every state and in multiple U.S. territories, offering hands-on and innovative health career curriculums for pre-college level students. They are committed to continuing education, clinical training of health professionals, and responding to community health needs. This is accomplished by forming academic and community partnerships that link the resources of academic health centers with the needs of the communities.

AHEC clinical training placements put health professions students in a variety of real-world settings, such as migrant, urban, and rural community health clinics and health departments that provide care to rural and underserved communities. Connecting students to their communities helps facilitate future engagement, encouraging health career students to remain in their clinical practice regions following their training. As the nation's population becomes more diverse, it is important that the health care workforce follows suit.

I have long supported the work of AHECs and particularly that of the University of South Florida AHEC program. Established in 1993, USF AHEC and its centers provide youth from diverse backgrounds with programs to inspire and support their interest in health careers through programs such as the Brain Expansion Scholastic Training (BEST), Recruitment and Education Assistance for Careers in Health (REACH), and AHEC Scholars. Students interested in medicine, nursing, dentistry, public health, pharmacy, and other disciplines are exposed to local free clinics in the Tampa Bay area—clinical training opportunities that illustrate the real-world impacts that poverty, racism, and inadequate access to health care have on the lives of their patients and families.

As part of a statewide system of 15 federally and state supported AHEC program offices and centers serving all of Florida's 67 counties, USF AHEC and its partners across the state have leveraged their statewide infrastructure to create numerous programs to benefit the residents of Florida. Since 2008, Florida's AHEC network has conducted a \$10 million annual comprehensive tobacco education

program and group cessation counseling initiative; worked with the state's Opioid Response Program to provide over \$1 million in education and training on opioids for health care providers, students, and community health workers; and partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to deliver HPV vaccine education and training programs.

Congress has tasked AHECs with an extraordinarily important mission, and the need to strengthen the health care workforce in our country continues to grow. According to a new report by the Association of American Medical Colleges, the U.S. could see a shortage of up to 124,000 physicians by 2034, and the American Hospital Association says more than 200,000 new registered nurses are needed each year to meet increasing health care needs and to replace nurses entering retirement. AHECs continue to be committed to addressing shortage areas and expanding the health care workforce, while maximizing diversity and facilitating distribution, especially in rural and underserved communities.

On behalf of my constituents at the USF Area Health Education Center and the AHEC program more broadly, I call on my colleagues to join me in recognizing March 28th to April 1st, 2022 as National AHEC (Area Health Education Centers) Week.

RECOGNIZING THE LIFE OF MAJOR GENERAL GARY WAYNE JOHN- STON

HON. TRENT KELLY

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Mr. KELLY of Mississippi. Madam Speaker, I rise today to celebrate the life and service of Major General Gary Wayne Johnston who passed away on January 20, 2022. My deepest condolences are with his family, friends, and loved ones during this time of mourning.

Gary Johnston was born on October 21, 1964 in Russellville, Arkansas. He served in the U.S. Army for over 34 years. He served overseas in Germany, the first Gulf War and Afghanistan and commanded the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Additionally, he was a director of intelligence of the United States Special Operations Command and the deputy chief of staff for intelligence for Resolute Support Mission. After retiring from the Army in 2021, Gary joined Touchstone Futures as the executive Vice President for Intelligence, Security, and Risk. He served on the advisory board for Leyden Solutions.

Left to cherish his memory are his beloved wife, Brigadier General Amy Johnston; his mother, Bonnie; children, Lauren, Blake, and Parker.

The Johnston family and all those who had the opportunity to know and serve with him are in my thoughts and prayers.

BARNEGAT, NEW JERSEY
VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY

HON. ANDY KIM

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Mr. KIM of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I rise today to express my gratitude for the service of our Vietnam veterans and the patriotism shown by the community of Barnegat, New Jersey as they honor Vietnam War Veterans Day. Today families gather to commemorate the 49th anniversary of final U.S. combat troops departing South Vietnam.

I had the opportunity to attend the second annual event in 2019 and have seen firsthand how much this day means not only to the veterans and their families, but to the visitors who travel from all over New Jersey to attend. Barnegat is the only town in the entire country to have a Vietnam veterans' monument fully funded by an individual Vietnamese refugee. Barnegat is setting an example on how we can honor the sacrifices Vietnam veterans made for our country and I sincerely hope this inspires others to reimagine how we remember our Vietnam veterans and all of our veterans.

New Jersey's 3rd Congressional District is home to one of the largest concentrations of veterans in the country, a place where more than sixty thousand veterans call Burlington and Ocean Counties home. With such a large population, we see brave servicemembers who have kept us safe every single day. To honor such a sacrifice, I know putting together a meaningful ceremony dedicated to the hundreds of Vietnam veterans here today is no small feat. Truly, it is people's passion and organizing that provides hope that military service will never be forgotten. Thy Cavagnaro and her team have done an exceptional job putting this together.

Our appreciation for our veterans should not solely be in ceremonies alone. The simple promise we make is that if someone steps up to protect us, our families, and our nation's security, we will have their backs for the rest of their lives. This promise is one that we as a nation have not always kept, and I am trying to fix that so our veterans and their families receive the benefits they have earned. Whether it is passing the Honoring our PACT Act to ensure all veterans exposed to toxic chemicals during their service have access to the care and benefits they deserve, or making everyday connections directly with veterans in the community, it is on all of us to recognize and celebrate our veterans every day.

For the thousands of Vietnam War veterans and the hundreds being recognized today at this ceremony, know we are eternally grateful and free thanks to their service.

HONORING LOS ANGELES JAZZ ICON BARBARA MORRISON

HON. KAREN BASS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 29, 2022

Ms. BASS. Madam Speaker, today I rise to celebrate the life and legacy of jazz and blues artist Barbara Morrison, founder of the California Jazz and Blues Museum in Leimert Park.